



CITY HALL PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

PAT Meeting

Monday, August 22, 2005, 3:00 – 4:30 PM

AGENDA WITH MEETING NOTES

Present

PAT: Cindy Bogar, Peggy Dreisinger, Laura Inveen, Neil Lukas, Tamara Menteer, Craig Montgomery, Bud Parker, Bob Peth, Amit Ranade, Jordan Royer Staff: Cheryl Fraser, David Goldberg, Victoria Schoenburg

Summary of Last Meeting, *Cheryl Fraser*

Park Programming Options

David Goldberg distributed information from a Project for Public Spaces web posting and summarized elements of what makes a park successful – programming, management and physical improvements. The PPS website is www.PPS.org

Craig Montgomery provided a brief overview of activities already underway in Pioneer Square's Occidental Park and Mall. During the past two years, PSCA has been increasingly working on programming open spaces in Pioneer Square, especially Occidental Square and Mall. Activities include:

- Very successful Art in the Park on First Thursdays.
- Temporary Bocce / Boules courts. These are fairly well used. Seattle Bocce scheduled a tournament last summer. David commented that this was an example of developing partnerships around the physical improvements to ensure they were used.
- Funky Market. These Saturday markets have attracted a variety of merchants, but attracting customers on the weekends has been difficult.
- Lunchtime Concerts. These are scheduled in cooperation with the MID.
- Two Movies are directed primarily at bringing residents out into a community setting.
- PSCA also funds movable chairs and tables. These are very popular. They are the communities latest approach to provide seating that is not monopolized by people sleeping or drinking. PSCA can only fund this during the summer months.
- PSCA also funds Cleanscapes cleaning in parks and open spaces. They also do the dumpster free alley program.

Victoria Schoenburg summarized activities underway at Freeway Park. These activities were organized following PPS work with the Freeway Park Neighborhood Association. Activities include:

- Funding a Recreation Leader position at the park. This person staffs the park, puts out moveable tables and chairs, and manages a "game cart," loaning out chess, checkers and other games for free. (he also plays the saxophone on occasion). His presence adds eyes on the park and immediately increased the friendly atmosphere. The Freeway Park Association has added to parks funding for this position to extend the hours.
- Lunchtime concerts.
- Library Used Book sales. This has been very successful and they're selling much more than they thought they would.
- Events designed for nearby daycares: tricycle events, water-play sprinkler days.
- Weekly senior walking program.

David requested that the PAT members provide ideas about how the park would be programmed. Comment included:

- TM – The Frye is mostly elderly residents. There are 30 units set aside for homeless. There are 5 teenagers.

- The Frye has a social service staff person who coordinates activities for residents.
- Residents interests are similar to older residents in general. They're interested in going on trips, picking blackberries and baking pies, gardening, walking dogs, playing tennis and chess, etc.
- There are 16 service dogs at the Frye.
- The residents mostly have to use a van to get to activities.
- TM suggested chess tables, garden patches, tennis courts.
- TM recommended having a homeless person on the PAT. The PAT endorsed this idea. Cheryl stated they would take this to the Superintendent for his consideration, and requested suggestions for a representative.
- NL – Suggestions he has heard include bocce courts and chess tables, and a small dog off leash area. He mentioned that the improvements focus on features that are self programming such as chess tables, kiosk. He commented that these elements also offer more opportunities for the diverse community to engage with each other.
- Other physical improvements suggested by Neil included fencing (At the last meeting he stressed that fencing can make it clear when a park is closed and makes the statement the people are guests in a treasured space.) and possibly moving the Prefontaine Fountain to a larger area in City Hall Park.
- JR – Said he supported the PPS focus on activating the edges of parks in order to make them more interesting and inviting. He mentioned the booksellers along Central Park's 5th Ave edge. He also commented that basketball hoops would be well used and that art would add an enduring and attractive element.
- Bob P – Stated that other south downtown parks including Hing Hay were having difficulties. IN particular, the automatic toilets are not working. The BIA was working to develop a proposal for programming. Some initial efforts have been hampered by homeless or groups aggressively "claiming" the park.
- Bob also mentioned that skateboarding in urban areas is very active and it's possible to design a facility that meets teens' interests (probably not bowls, but urban elements). He passed out an example of a very successful design.
- LI – Stated the most repeated comment from people she spoke with was their desire to see the portable toilet removed. A long discussion followed about the benefits and difficulties of providing public restrooms.
- Bud P – Suggested that Dilling Way might be closed to allow for joining the southern triangle to the rest of the park. The PAT May wish to consider if opening Jefferson would help by creating and active street along the south side of the courthouse.
- He suggested that some parks function because they provide the opportunity for activity rather than being full of things that we hope get used. Consider more hardscape in the park to allow for activity.
- TM – suggested that the park and area in general needs more foot patrols rather than cars and bike patrols.
- CB- When talking to businesses, she heard that many had little faith that there were viable options and/or a commitment to improve the park. She stressed that the project needs to be clear about who will be served by the park.
- One of the ideas to consider is that there are no meeting spaces in Pioneer Square where businesses can gather for activities. Many Pioneer Square businesses are not looking for the traditional downtown locations. The PAT should consider if there is a way to include a portion of the spaces for such uses.
- Cindy also pointed out that many workers arrive by transit and the first thing they see out of the tunnel is the park. If it's not clean (and often it isn't) there is no way they will go there for lunch. The highest priority is cleanliness. Need a long term commitment to that, rather than more than flashy improvements.
- CF – Reminded people that last meeting the PAT had also discussed the idea of formal gardens that were maintain throughout the year.

David summarized the Downtown Parks and Open Space Task Force's initial idea for the role of City Hall Park in Downtown. The Task Force suggested that the park be an "Active neighborhood-oriented park that meets the needs of neighbors and workers." David suggested that the PAT consider this description as they progress with the defining programming in the park.

Next Steps

- Next meeting September 12. Staff will organize the ideas into a couple of models for park programming and send those out to committee members prior to the next PAT meeting.
- Homework Assignment – Email ideas on programming contacts and stakeholders to interview to David Goldberg.
- Consultants will complete existing conditions analysis of park and surrounding areas.